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November 21, 2001

Hon. Judge J. Frederick Motz

U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland

Your Honor:

In light of the recent and pending decisions regarding the Microsoft settlement proposed on November 20th, 2001, I would like to voice my support for the alternative settlement proposal set forth by Matthew Szulik, CEO of Red Hat Software, Inc.

I applaud Microsoft in their apparent drive to support educational facilities, especially under-supported and under-funded school districts like mine. My fiancé is a teacher at one of these schools, in Washington state. I can see first hand the need to have new and better computing facilities, and I believe wholeheartedly that good resources help make good students better, and give poor or undermotivated students the means to explore the world in a convenient, rarely outdated way.

I also can attest to the fact that more is better, when it comes to computers. Currently the classrooms at Discovery Middle School in Clark county have, at best, 3 or 4 ancient Macintosh computers. The rare times the students do get to use them must be shared, and it becomes a privilege out of necessity.

I believe Microsoft should uphold their end of this settlement not by supplying overpriced software that expires and forces schools to either abandon them at great cost, or pay exorbitant licensing fees on already stretched budgets, but by supplying hardware, and a choice, to each school they propose to help.

Instead of giving 14 computers to each school, loaded with software that perpetuates and enforces Microsoft's monopolistic ways, why not give 70 computers to each school, loaded with free software that is as secure and useful as a learning tool to each of the 56 extra children who get to take advantage of this settlement?

Please, I beg you, do not help Microsoft become an even greater giant, with more of a stronghold on the schools in a few years than they have now. If Microsoft wishes to give away their software in this settlement and support it for free and for eternity as RedHat would, then by all means, I applaud them for their generosity.

But I do not think this is the case. Please consider the alternative settlement generously suggested by Mr. Szulik and already possible.

Sincerely,



Nathan Conner

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